

By: Ellis

S.B. No. 1167

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to relating to autonomous motor vehicles.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter F, Chapter 521, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 521.1236 to read as follows:

Sec. 521.1236. DESIGNATOR ON LICENSE ISSUED FOR OPERATING AUTONOMOUS MOTOR VEHICLE. (a) In this section, "autonomous motor vehicle" has the meaning assigned by Section 545.428, Transportation Code.

(b) The department shall establish a program to provide an autonomous motor vehicle operation designation either on the face of a driver's license or on the reverse side of the driver's license issued to a person who is authorized to operate an autonomous motor vehicle under Section 545.428.

SECTION 2. Section 541.001(1), Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

(1) "Operator" means, as used in reference to a vehicle, a person who drives or has physical control of a vehicle, except as provided by Section 545.428(b).

SECTION 3. Subchapter I, Chapter 545, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 545.428 to read as follows:

Sec. 545.428. OPERATION OF AUTONOMOUS MOTOR VEHICLES; PILOT PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

(1) "Autonomous motor vehicle" means a motor vehicle

1 that is capable of using autonomous technology to operate itself  
2 without the active control or continuous monitoring of a person.

3 (2) "Autonomous technology" means technology  
4 installed on a motor vehicle enabling the vehicle to operate  
5 without the active control or continuous monitoring of a person.

6 The term does not include, except to the extent that such a system  
7 may be a component of autonomous technology, individual safety  
8 systems or driver assistance systems that enhance safety or provide  
9 driver assistance, but are not individually capable of operating a  
10 motor vehicle without the active control or continuous monitoring  
11 of a person, such as systems designed to provide:

12 (A) collision avoidance;

13 (B) electronic blind spot assistance;

14 (C) crash avoidance;

15 (D) automated emergency braking;

16 (E) parking assistance;

17 (F) adaptive cruise control;

18 (G) lane keep assistance;

19 (H) lane departure warning; or

20 (I) traffic jam and queuing assistance.

21 (3) "Upfitter" means a person who modifies a motor  
22 vehicle after manufacturing to convert the motor vehicle into an  
23 autonomous motor vehicle.

24 (b) An operator of an autonomous motor vehicle operating  
25 with autonomous technology is:

26 (1) a person who causes the vehicle's autonomous  
27 technology to engage, regardless of whether the person is

1 physically in the autonomous motor vehicle while the vehicle is  
2 operating; or

3 (2) a person who is seated in the driver's seat of the  
4 autonomous motor vehicle and continuously monitors the operation of  
5 the autonomous motor vehicle.

6 (c) A person may not operate an autonomous motor vehicle on  
7 a roadway or public highway under Subsection (b) unless:

8 (1) the person holds a driver's license with an  
9 autonomous motor vehicle designation under Section 521.1236; and

10 (2) the person is an employee, contractor, or designee  
11 of:

12 (A) The Texas Department of Safety;

13 (B) The Texas Department of Transportation;

14 (C) a manufacturer of autonomous motor vehicles  
15 authorized by the department to operate autonomous motor vehicles;

16 or

17 (D) an upfitter authorized by the department to  
18 operate autonomous motor vehicles.

19 (d) A person may not disable motor vehicle safety features  
20 that are required by state and federal law during installation of  
21 autonomous technology on a motor vehicle or operation of an  
22 autonomous motor vehicle.

23 (e) The department shall adopt rules authorizing the  
24 operation of autonomous motor vehicles on roadways and public  
25 highways, including rules:

26 (1) establishing minimum requirements that an  
27 autonomous motor vehicle must meet before the vehicle may be

1 operated on a roadway or public highway;  
2 (2) establishing insurance requirements for:  
3 (A) autonomous motor vehicle operators;  
4 (B) manufacturers of autonomous motor vehicles  
5 operating autonomous motor vehicles; and  
6 (C) upfitters operating autonomous motor  
7 vehicles;  
8 (3) governing the safe operation of autonomous motor  
9 vehicles on roadways and public highways;  
10 (4) establishing a method of authorizing  
11 manufacturers of autonomous motor vehicles and upfitters to test  
12 autonomous motor vehicles and governing the testing of autonomous  
13 motor vehicles;  
14 (5) restricting the operation of autonomous motor  
15 vehicles to certain geographic regions of this state; and  
16 (f) The Texas Department of Transportation may establish an  
17 autonomous freight transportation pilot program to collaborate  
18 with autonomous motor vehicle manufacturers and upfitters to test  
19 the use of autonomous motor vehicles for heavy freight  
20 transportation purposes.  
21 (g) The Texas Department of Transportation shall establish  
22 a plan to install or deploy roadside infrastructure for a statewide  
23 wireless communication system to support vehicle-to-infrastructure  
24 communications that are essential to the proper performance or  
25 operation of autonomous motor vehicles. The plan must incorporate  
26 the dedicated short-range communications protocols of the United  
27 States Department of Transportation and the microwave bands

1 allocated by the Federal Communications Commission for dedicated  
2 short-range communications. The Texas Department of  
3 Transportation may explore other wireless methods of communication  
4 for communications that are not essential to the proper performance  
5 or operation of autonomous motor vehicles.

6 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
7 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
8 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
9 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
10 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.